

Message Text

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STADIS////////////////////////////////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, ECON, EIND, IV

SUBJECT: COCOA AGREEMENT: SECOND DISCUSSION WITH

MINAG SAWADOGO

REFERENCE (A) LONDON 00816, (B) ABIDJAN 206, (C) 75 STATE 300220

1. ON JANUARY 19, I MET WITH AGRICULTURE MINISTER
ABDOULAYE SAWADOGO AT HIS REQUEST FURTHER TO DISCUSS
PROSPECTS FOR MODIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COCOA
AGREEMENT. SINCE MY LAST MEETING WITH HIM (REFTEL B)
HE HAD SEEN KWESI URIAH HACKMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
ICCO, AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN COCOA PRODUCERS'
ALLIANCE.

2. HACKMAN TOLD SAWADOGO HE FEARED US WAS JUST STALLING,
THAT PRESENT AGREEMENT COULD ONLY BE EXTENDED MAXIMUM OF
ONE MORE YEAR AND THAT THIS WOULD PUT PRESSURE OF SHORT
DEADLINE ON NEGOTIATORS FOR AN ENTIRELY NEW AGREEMENT.

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HACKMAN SUGGESTED ONE ALTERNATIVE TO RENEGOTIATION

OF THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE TO ACCEPT THE NEW AGREEMENT, WHILE LIMITING ITS DURATION TO TWO YEARS.

3. SAWADO GO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE NEW AGREEMENT WOULD BEGIN TO HURT IVORY COAST AFTER A YEAR OR TWO BECAUSE OF THE LIMITATIONS THAT IT PUTS ON COCOA PRODUCTION EXPANSION. HE REITERATED, HOWEVER, THAT US NEEDS TO CONVINCE PRODUCERS THAT WE ARE NOT STALLING BUT RELY WANT A WORKABLE AGREEMENT.

4. I COMMENTED THAT THE PROBLEM WITH THE HACKMAN APPROACH IS ONCE AN AGREEMENT IS ACCEPTED BY THE NEGOTIATING PARTIES IT BECOMES MORE DIFFICULT TO ALTER IT. SAWADO GO AGREED AND STRESSED HE IS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE NEW AGREEMENT.

5. ON THE BASIS OF ALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN COCOA PRODUCERS ALLIANCE, SAWADO GO ASSURED ME THAT THE PRESIDENTS OF THE ALLIANCE COUNTRIES WILL BE MEETING SOON AT A DATE NOT YET ESTABLISHED. THAT MEETING WILL STILL OFFER THE POSSIBILITY OF REOPENING THE WHOLE QUESTION OF COCOA AGREEMENTS.

6. IN DISCUSSING THE RECENT VISIT OF MESSRS. BAKER AND BATEMAN OF MARS COMPANY, SAWADO GO SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM THESE INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES THAT THEY WOULD FAVOR THE ENTERING INTO A COCOA AGREEMENT UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS. THE MINISTER FURTHER STATED THAT SINCE MOST PRODUCING COUNTRIES FEEL THE US DOES NOT WANT A COCOA AGREEMENT, IVORY COAST, TOGETHER WITH US, MUST CONVINCE THESE COUNTRIES THAT THE US DOES, IN FACT, LOOK FAVORABLY ON AN AGREEMENT IF WORKABLE AND BENEFICIAL TO THE CONSUMERS AS WELL AS TO THE PRODUCERS.

7. COMMENT. LAST WEEK EMBOFF MET WITH M. IBRAHIM TOURE, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SACO, LARGEST IVORIAN PROCESSOR OF COCOA BEANS. TOURE, A MAJOR COCOA PLANTER AND FORMER OFFICIAL IN AGRICULTURE MINISTRY, BELIEVED STILL TO BE INFLUENTIAL IN GOVERNMENT CIRCLES, TOLD EMBOFF THAT HACKMAN WAS WARMLY WELCOMED BY IVORY COAST, AS IS NATURE OF IVORIAN PEOPLE, BUT THAT HIS DISCUSSIONS DID NOT DISSUADE PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY FROM REFUSING TO SIGN NEW COCOA AGREEMENT. TOURE SAID IVORIAN

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PRESIDENT IS PROUD OF HAVING SUPPORTED PREVIOUS COCOA AGREEMENT EVEN AFTER OTHER SIGNATORIES CEASED TO ABIDE BY IT. HOUPHOUET IS IRRITATED BY OTHER COCOA-PRODUCING COUNTRIES WHICH TALK BIG IN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS BUT WHICH SELL UNDER THE TABLE TO THEIR OWN ADVANTAGE AFTER THE MEETING ARE OVER. EMBOFF BELIEVES THIS REMARK TO HAVE BEEN DIRECTED PARTICULARLY TOWARD GHANA. END COMMENT.

8. FURTHER COMMENT. WHILE IT APPEARS THAT SAWADOGO
IS STILL SYMPATHETIC TO THE IDEA OF A WHOLLY NEW AGREEMENT,
HE NEEDS TO BE BOLSTERED BY NEW ASSURANCES THAT WE WILL PLAN
AN ACTIVE ROLE, PARTICULARLY WITH OTHER CONSUMERS, AND THAT
WE ARE NOT SIMPLY STALLING. END COMMENT. SMITH

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